

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY, A.D. 1996

CHAPTER

86-180

JT COMM. LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
LAW REVISION OFFICE

AN ACT

RELATING TO 911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALLS

96-S 2322

Introduced By: Senators Gorham, Porter and Blais

Date Introduced: January 18, 1996

Referred To: Senate Committee on
Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 39-21.1 of the general laws is hereby amended by

2 adding the following section thereto:

3 39-21.1-17. Confidentiality of calls. -- All telephone calls and telephone

4 call transmissions received pursuant to this chapter and all tapes containing

5 records of telephone calls shall remain confidential and used only for the

6 purpose of handling emergency calls and for public safety purposes as may be

7 needed for law enforcement, fire, medical, rescue or other emergency services.

8 Such calls shall not be released to any other parties without the written consent

9 of the ~~person~~ ^{caller} whose voice is recorded, or upon order of court.

10 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

*see
Gorham
Amended
6/18/96
LDA*

the

CHAPTER AND SECTION
REFERENCE ASSIGNED BY
JOINT COMMITTEE ON
LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
00021

KRH
10/9/96

**EXPLANATION
OF
AN ACT**

RELATING TO EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALLS

- 1 This act would provide for the confidentiality of taped 911 emergency
- 2 telephone calls.

JUD

96-2322

AS AMENDED

AN ACT

PUBLIC LAWS
CHAPTER

96-180

RELATING TO 911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALLS

JOINT COMM. LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
LAW REVISION OFFICE

READ AND PASSED IN CONCURRENCE
TRANSMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR

AUG 1 1996

Raymond T. Hynes Jr.
CLERK OF THE SENATE

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED
AUG 01 1996

APPROVED
AUG 05 1996

GOVERNOR

Handwritten:
Snyder/Prism 41
Ron Porter (23)
Reed/Wall (21)

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JUNE 11 1996

THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
RECOMMEND THE PASSAGE IN CON-
CURRENCE 96-2322
OF THE WITHIN BILL.

FOR THE COMMITTEE

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
RECEIVED AND ORDERED
TO BE PLACED UPON THE
JUN 11 1996
CALENDAR
FOR THE COMMITTEE

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
READ & PASSED
JUN 18 1996
AS AMENDED
FOR THE COMMITTEE

IN THE SENATE JUL 31 1996

Read and PASSED
IN CONCURRENCE

Reading Clerk

IN THE SENATE JAN 18 1996

Read and referred to
the Committee on
JUDICIARY

Reading Clerk

IN SENATE 7/17/96

THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
RECOMMEND THE PASSAGE 96-2322
OF THE WITHIN BILL

FOR THE COMMITTEE

IN THE SENATE APR 9 1996

Ordered to be
placed upon the
calendar.

Reading Clerk

IN THE SENATE APR 23 1996

Read and PASSED

Reading Clerk

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON
JUDICIARY
APR 23 1996
FOR THE COMMITTEE



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196
401-277-2080

LINCOLN ALMOND
GOVERNOR

August 5, 1996

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SENATE:

I am transmitting to the Secretary of State, with my signature, 96-S-2322, as amended, "An Act Relating to 911 Emergency Telephone Calls."

This Act prohibits the public disclosure of telephone calls made to the State 911 system absent the written consent of the caller or an order of the court.

I support this legislation. By providing confidentiality for 911 calls, this Act serves to protect 911 callers from unwanted invasions of privacy and potential public embarrassment. Such protections reasonably can be expected to enhance the use of this important emergency telephone system by removing reservations by some individuals to make 911 calls.

Opponents have expressed concern that this legislation may limit accountability of the 911 authority to the public. I believe, however, that this legislation provides safeguards sufficient to ensure such accountability. Since the protection from disclosure applies only to the substance of the call and the identity of the caller, information could be made available as to the number of calls received by the 911 system and the timeliness of actions taken by the system in response. Individual callers to 911 who believe that their calls are not being handled appropriately can give permission to release the substance of the call for public review. In addition, those third parties, including governmental agencies, who have concerns about the operation of 911 can bring a legal action seeking to obtain a court order for release of appropriate information. These safeguards adequately protect the public's interest in and oversight of the operation of 911.

With this message, I sign this bill into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lincoln Almond", written over a horizontal line.

Lincoln Almond



PL 180

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196
401-277-2080

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